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# "Juba"

(Dance)

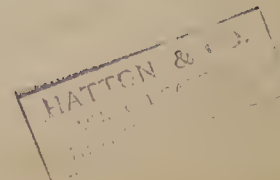
From the Suite  
"In the Bottoms"  
for the Piano  
by  
R. Nathaniel Dett



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## IN THE BOTTOMS.

### Characteristic Suite.

*"More an expression than a painting."*


Beethoven.

"In the Bottoms" is a Suite of five numbers giving pictures of moods or scenes peculiar to Negro life in the river bottoms of the Southern sections of North America. It is similar in its expression, and in a way a continuation of the sentiments already set forth in the "Magnolia" Suite, but suggests ideas incidental to life in a more particular geographic territory. Neither Suite, like Dvorak's famous "New World Symphony" is dependent for its effect upon the introduction of folk-songs, either in their natural, or in a highly developed form. As it is quite possible to describe the traits, habits and customs of a people without using the vernacular, so is it similarly possible to musically portray racial peculiarities without the use of national tunes or folk-songs. "In the Bottoms," then, belongs to that class of music known as "Program music" or "music with a poetic basis." The source of the "program" or "poetic basis" has already been referred to, and the following notes are appended to show that its relation to the music is intimate.

No. 1. Prelude—is nightfall; the heavy chords represent the heavy shadows, and the open fifths, the peculiar hollow effect of the stillness; the syncopated melody which occurs, is the "tunning" of a banjo, which music is, however, only incidental to the gloom.

No. 2. His Song—The psychological phenomenon is historic, that the moods of suppressed people have oftenest found their most touching expression in song. An aged Negro will sometimes sit for hours in the quiet of an evening, humming an improvised air, whose wierd melody seems to strangely satisfy a nameless yearning of the heart.

No. 3. Honey—Literally, "Honey" is a colloquialism—the familiar term of endearment (South). It may mean much, little, everything or nothing; the intimation here, is one of coquetry. It is after a poem, "A Negro Love Song" by Paul Laurence Dunbar.

No. 4. The rhythmic figure,——which forms the theme of this Barcarolle is in reality, the rhythmic motif of the whole Suite; it is of most frequent occurrence in the music of the ante-bellum folk-dances, and its marked individuality has caused it to be much misused for purposes of caricature. Here it paints the pleasure of a sunshiny morning on the Father of Waters.

No. 5. Dance—This is probably the most characteristic number of the Suite, as it portrays more of the social life of the people. "Juba" is the stamping on the ground with the foot and following it with two staccato pats of the hands in two-four time. At least one-third of the dancers keep time in this way, while the others dance. Sometimes all will combine together in order to urge on a solo dancer to more frantic (and at the same time more fantastic) endeavors. The orchestra usually consists of a single "fiddler," perched high on a box or table; who, forgetful of self in the rather hilarious excitement of the hour, does the impossible in the way of double stopping and bowing.

\*\*\*A word of warning cannot be suppressed in regard to the tempo of the "Dance." Do not take it *too fast!* Much of the dancing in the bottoms is done with a grace and finish that a *Presto* tempo never could suggest.

\*\*\*Metronome marks, which should be carefully observed, are given for all of the movements. The Prelude should open and close with an air of mystery, and most of its serenade part be kept subdued as if sounding from afar. Let the major-key portion of His Song have a decidedly hopeful tone as it has prophetic significance. Flirt all you please with Honey; let your love of the beautiful in Nature permeate the Barcarolle, but don't become too boisterous in the dance; remember always that program music is at its best when most in accord with those sentiments uttered by the great Beethoven in regard to his own "Pastoral Symphony" when he said,—*"more an expression than a painting."*

R. Nathaniel Dett.

# "JUBA" (DANCE)

3

Non Troppo Allegro ♩ = 120 - 144

R. NATHANIEL DETT

*mf* *non legato*



The musical score consists of five systems of staves, each with a treble and bass clef. The notation is as follows:

- System 1:** Treble staff has a *sf marcato* instruction. Bass staff has a *sf simile* instruction. Both staves feature triplet markings (3) and a *Red.* (Reduction) marking.
- System 2:** Treble staff has a *sf* instruction. Bass staff has a *sf* instruction. Both staves feature a *Red.* marking and a *\** (crescendo) marking.
- System 3:** Treble staff has a *sf* instruction. Bass staff has a *poco dim-in-u-en-do* instruction. Both staves feature a *f* instruction and a *mf* instruction. The system includes first and second endings marked with 1 and 2.
- System 4:** Treble staff has a *mf* instruction. Bass staff has a *mf* instruction. Both staves feature a *mf* instruction.
- System 5:** Treble staff has a *mf* instruction. Bass staff has a *mf* instruction. Both staves feature a *mf* instruction.

The musical score is written for piano and consists of five systems of staves. The first four systems are in bass clef, while the fifth system is in treble clef. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *mp* and *p*. There are also handwritten annotations like *2b* and *smo.*. The piece concludes with a *cresc.* marking.

mp

2b

p

cresc.





stacc.

*p*

*poco a poco*

*cresc.*

[illegible]

Musical score for "The Merry Widow" (No. 10). The score is written for piano and voice. The piano part is in the left hand, and the voice part is in the right hand. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The score is divided into four measures. The first measure has a forte (f) dynamic marking. The second measure has a piano (p) dynamic marking. The third and fourth measures have a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic marking. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

8

Handwritten musical score for 'The Rose Tree'. The score is written on two staves, Treble and Bass clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The melody is in the Treble clef, and the bass line is in the Bass clef. The score includes a repeat sign at the beginning and a 'Coda' symbol at the end. The tempo/mood is marked 'Grazo' (Grazioso). The score is handwritten and includes a large 'X' over the first measure of the second system.

Handwritten musical score for "The Swan" by Camille Saint-Saëns. The score is written on two staves: a piano (p) part on the left and a left hand (L.H.) part on the right. The piano part is in G major, 3/4 time, and features a melody with a trill in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The left hand part is in G major, 3/4 time, and features a melody with a trill in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *sf* (sforzando). There are also handwritten annotations in the right margin, including "2 notes" and "L.H.".

# PIANO COMPOSITIONS of R. NATHANIEL DETT



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